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REVIEW & OUTLOOK 'Peace, Comrade'

When the House Select Committee on Intelligence recently released FBI and CIA testimony on "active measures" by the Soviets to influence public policy in the West, Rep. Edward P. Boland fixed the press and popular reaction with a press release saying "The bottom line is that hearings provide no evidence that the Soviets direct, manage or manipulate the nuclear freeze movement." We have now read the actual 337-page report, and suggest that Rep. Boland might want to try the same exercise himself.

Item A in Rep. Boland's interpretation of the hearings is a statement by Edward J. O'Malley, assistant director of the FBI's intelligence division. Mr. O'Malley testified that some 500,000 people participated in the June 12 freeze demonstration in New York City, and that "I would not attribute the large turnout at this demonstration to the efforts" of Communist or Communist-dominated groups—the Communist Party U.S.A., the U.S. Peace Council or the World Peace Council.

This denies what no one, not even the freeze movement's most severe critic, has alleged. The concern, rather, has been that the freeze theme parallels Communist propaganda efforts, that Communists are active in the Western European peace movement and the related U.S. freeze movement, and that the sincere protesters who undeniably provide most of the power behind the movements are recklessly cavalier about Communist connections. The same Mr. O'Malley had some other interesting things to say in this regard.

For example, "The U.S. Peace Council and the World Peace Council, as well as CPUSA members, were actively involved in the planning and implementation of the June 12 demonstration." By way of definition, he added that the U.S. Peace Council is an affiliate of the World Peace Council, which he further described as "the largest and most active Soviet international front organization."

"In the last few years, the Communist Party Soviet Union instructed the CPUSA to place high priority on issues of arms control and disarmament and the peace movement," Mr. O'Malley continued. "The Soviets have used the Communist Party, U.S.A. to mount campaigns against the neutron bomb, NATO theater nuclear force modernization and administration defense policies. Furthermore, the Soviets have requested the CPUSA to reinforce and mobilize the peace movement in this country."

According to an FBI report, the World Peace Council "was deeply engaged, almost to the exclusion of other projects," in preparations for the U.N.'s Second Special Session on Disarmament last spring. Meanwhile, the FBI added that the U.S. Peace Council was involved in organizing the 500,000-person rally, and that the U.S. Communist Party "was a member of the June 12 coalition, which was responsible for actually coordinating and planning the rally."

The FBI's position is, then, that the Communist Party and Communist fronts were indeed active in the demonstration, but not crucial to its success. The logical question is whether Communist participation mattered, and on this the FBI also has an opinion. In participating in planning the demonstration, "The USPC reportedly attempted to channel the theme of the protest away from the Soviet Union and against the U.S."

Any eye-witness to the march past the U.N. must have been struck, as we certainly were, that there weren't any signs, banners or chants against, say, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan or the use of "yellow rain." The U.S. administration, though, was certainly given a lot of grief. There is reason to suspect, in short, that Communist efforts within the freeze movement have been successful in shifting attention away from the Soviet Union's massive military buildup and toward the Reagan administration's defense programs. Perhaps this does not meet Rep. Boland's definition of "manipulating" the freeze movement, but it certainly meets ours.

Indeed, Rep. Boland's hear-no-evil, see-no-evil attitude perfectly exemplifies what we find objectionable about the leaders of the freeze movement. By now the Europeans, who have watched their own peace movement longer than we have watched the freeze, have lost any such naivete. Both Denmark and Norway, for example, have expelled Soviet diplomats for trying to influence their peace movements. West German groups have fought Communist takeovers. And Bruno Kreisky, chancellor of neutralist Austria, says "the Soviets have spent millions on the peace campaign."

None of this means for a moment that the great bulk of the freeze movement is anything but sincere, or that the movement would not exist without Communist initiative. But there is a Communist Party and there are Communist fronts even in the U.S., and they are promoting not peace but Soviet interests. The American labor movement learned long ago that it had to purge Communists to protect its own interests, and American liberals originally formed the Americans for Democratic Action for the same reasons. It is anything but demagogic to ask the peace/freeze movement to do the same thing today; indeed, any political movement that does not throw a dark shadow over the cause it hopes to advance.